

Smooth Transition

Home
Stretch
WA

Practice Guidelines and Resource
for Supporting a Smooth Transition



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Produced by:
Anglicare WA

Home Stretch WA Team

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge all of the elders, foster and family carers, residential care programs, biological families and young people who have so generously and courageously contributed their learned and lived expertise in the design and development of the Smooth Transition Guide.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to their strength, cultural resilience and the Elders past and present.



How to use this Guide & Contents

This Practice Guideline has been developed to provide information on the Home Stretch WA Referral pathway and how to support a young person and their support circle to ensure a smooth transition into the Home Stretch WA service.

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"A Smooth Transition from being in care to being an adult."

"It's not just giving a file (providing a young person with their Department Child History File), it's giving trauma, it's giving triggers and so what I can't stress enough if we really want to give our young people the chance to thrive after they receive their file, I really, really encourage a warm handover, a really supportive handover. We need to be emotionally invested in this. A trauma-informed approach or practice that we can do with young people to do this handover."- **Quote from a Lived Experience Consultant, Home Stretch WA**



What is a Smooth Transition?

The Home Stretch WA team working together with a young person and their support circle from age 17.5 years, to ensure a warm handover from the District Office to the Home Stretch WA provider, and a seamless continuation of support until the age of 21 years.

It is also about young people being aware of their rights and how to independently access support until they are 21.

Background & Purpose of a Smooth Transition

Need for Extended Time and Support in Transitioning to Adulthood

Young people needed a support system that gave them time to transition to becoming an adult and build the knowledge, skills and connections in their community to manage financially and their overall well-being. Some young people were not ready before 18 to start long term planning about what they might need in the future. It would end up being a pointless and static document.

Others, as identified by Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia, may be ready earlier with some Aboriginal young people wanting to plan for adulthood as early as 12 years old.

Inconsistent Leaving Care Planning

Leaving care planning was not consistent across Districts, beginning anywhere from 15 to 18. Participation in post care services needed to be tracked to determine need and uptake and demand management approaches needed to be objective and transparent.

Young people were not making their own choices about post care supports, referrals were sometimes rushed, often not involving the young person at all and circumstances and contact details were likely to change for a young person during this time, making connecting with a young person difficult. Young people needed a system that allowed them to be able to access support when they were ready, even if this was beyond 18.

Challenges for young people in Seeking Support

Young people who have been exposed to childhood trauma often have difficulty seeking support or forming trusted relationship with helpful adults. An approach was needed where young people were warmly introduced to additional supports over an extended period of time, through someone they *trusted. This was critical to brokering post-care supports and relationships.

The Importance of 'Epistemic Trust'

Epistemic Trust – An individual's willingness to consider new knowledge as trustworthy and relevant, and therefore worth integrating into their lives. It has important implications on people's capacity to engage and their expectations of helping relationships.

For Aboriginal families and young people, trust is also strongly connected to safe organisations known and vouched for by family members and community.

Background & Purpose of a Smooth Transition

Need for Clear and Early Information about Post Care Supports

Young people and families wanted information about post-care supports such as Home Stretch WA, provided early and in different formats to meet their individual needs. It was also important to clarify the difference between support provided by Home Stretch WA and case management provided by Child Protection.

Young people preferred to receive information about the service offer directly from a Transition Coach rather than a District case worker, so they can make their own choice based on the information provided without feeling shame.

Avoiding Stigma & Shame around Care

Often the young people who needed more time to make leaving care decisions were wary of the Child Protection system and talked about the shame of 'being in care'. Young people were clear that any extended support must be provided through services that were not delivered by the Department.

Benefits of Early & Consistent Support from a Transition Coach

During the Home Stretch WA Trial, it was found that young people who were supported by a coach from 17 ½ were more likely to develop a stronger relationship with their coach, catch up more often and on a regular basis, than those who only met their coach after 18.

When the coach met with the young person from 17 ½, they were able to support the young person's leaving care planning, celebrate with them when they turned 18 and transitioned to leaving care with a warm handover of information about their support circles.

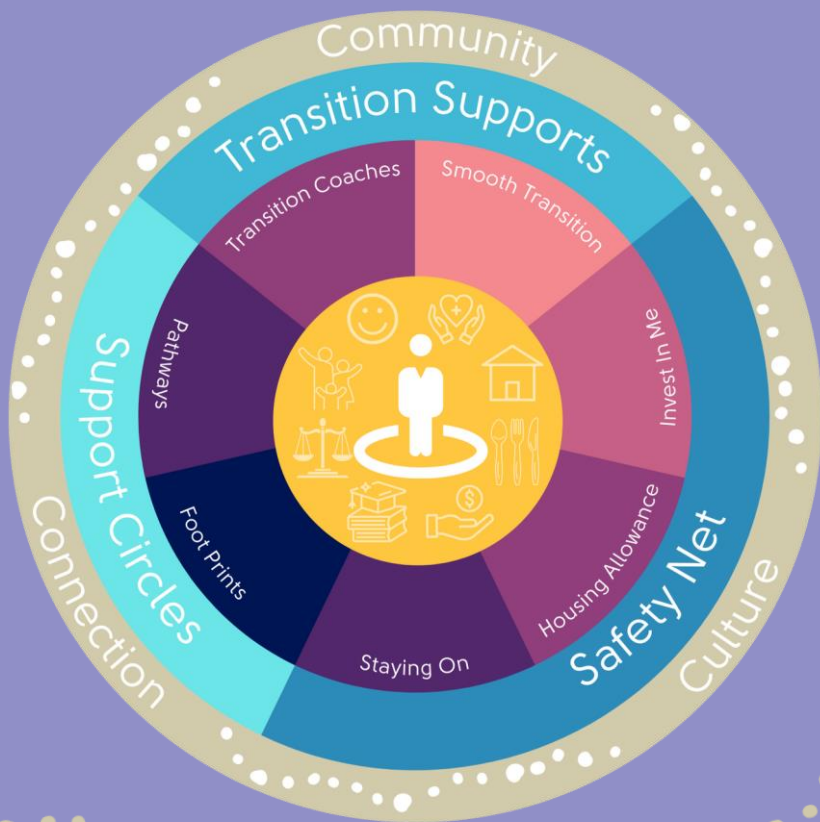
Trusting Relationships for a Smooth Transition

Trusting relationships between child protection staff and home stretch WA team members were recognised as a critical foundation for a smooth transition. Where there were clear communication channels, established relationships between workers, and agreed expectations around roles, young people were more likely to experience a smooth transition of support.

Need for a Coordinated Post-Care Support System

Young people needed an intentional and coordinated post-care support system where extended time was provided to do the planning and providers could link young people to services. By 21, young people would have an adapted Leaving Care Plan to hand back to the system and were prepared to seek help and communicate their post care support needs to a District Office.

Home Stretch WA Model



Young people are at centre of support. Everyone is treated as an individual



Support or connection is offered in all areas of life



Support is delivered in specific ways [Practice Approaches] that work for young people



Home Stretch WA focuses on 3 key elements of support



Home Stretch WA greater purpose is to connect young people with their community and culture.

Smooth Transition & Trauma Informed Practice

Transition Coaches must be trauma informed at all stages of their work, but it is critical at the beginning of engagement for the young person to have safety and control in the process of choosing to engage in Home Stretch WA.

This means that coaches must be aware and sensitive to the impact of trauma on young people's attachment style and ability to build trust, and a deliberate attention to working in a trauma informed way.

Safety

- The environment and location of early meetings is determined and agreed upon by the young person.
- Young people are not pressured by others, and people they trust are involved in the referral process.
- Only information that is relevant to supporting a young person is collected during referral.
- Cultural awareness and respect of protocols and boundaries around relationships are maintained. Advice is sought from practice leads and culturally competent colleagues in how best to offer services and supports to young people and their families.



Trust

- The service offer is clearly communicated, along with any expectations about conditions related to the payment of subsidies or allowances.
- The Transition Coach maintains healthy boundaries and works within their role and the needs of the young person to engage them in the service offer.
- Aboriginal families and young people have the choice to engage with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation for Home Stretch WA support.
- Aboriginal families and young people have the option to have their stories and concerns heard before they are asked to make a decision about Home Stretch.

Choice

- Home Stretch WA is not a choice made on behalf of the young person, they are to be fully informed and provided an opportunity to decide at a time that is developmentally appropriate.
- Alternative supports and options for post-care are presented at the same time during the info session, in a way that doesn't bias options.
- Young people can choose to have people from their support circle attend the info session, and this is intentionally planned through the referral process.
- Where a guardian's consent needs to be obtained, the young person must also be present and have agency in decision making.

Smooth Transition & Trauma Informed Practice

Transition Coaches must be trauma informed at all stages of their work, but it is critical at the beginning of engagement for the young person to have safety and control in the process of choosing to engage in Home Stretch WA.

Collaboration

- Interdependence is a critical focus of the Home Stretch WA service offer, young people's support circles are mapped and opportunities for strengthening of relationships is considered in all interventions or services provided.
- Transition Coach dedicate time and effort in building genuine relationships with young people, carefully balancing formal practice with informal engagement activities.
- Young people are provided information about their transition coach before meeting with them.
- Foster and Family carers are respected and valued, and the strengths of their families in supporting their children are a foundation for the Transition Coach to build on.
- Aboriginal family kinship structures underlie the care of all Aboriginal children. Aboriginal identity has been sustained through family life and family affiliations are at the heart of Aboriginal identity.

Empowerment

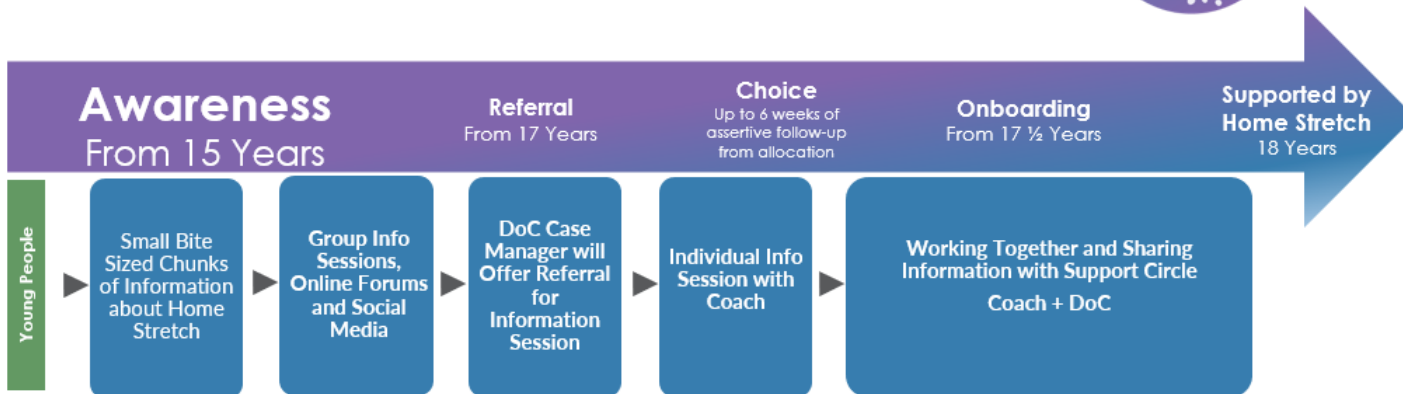
- Young people are defined by their strengths and capacities, referral information captures this information as well as the challenges they face.
- Young people are equipped with information to make informed choices about the services they receive.
- The right for a young person to Opt-In and Opt-Out of Home Stretch WA is clearly communicated to them.
- Aboriginal people have a fundamental right to self-determination, and where possible Aboriginal community should be empowered to support young people through their journey to adulthood.



Transition Coaches Typically Spend a few hours per fortnight in a nominated district office, co-locating to build trust and connections between the child protection staff and Home Stretch WA Team



Smooth Transition Pathway



Smooth Transition Pathway

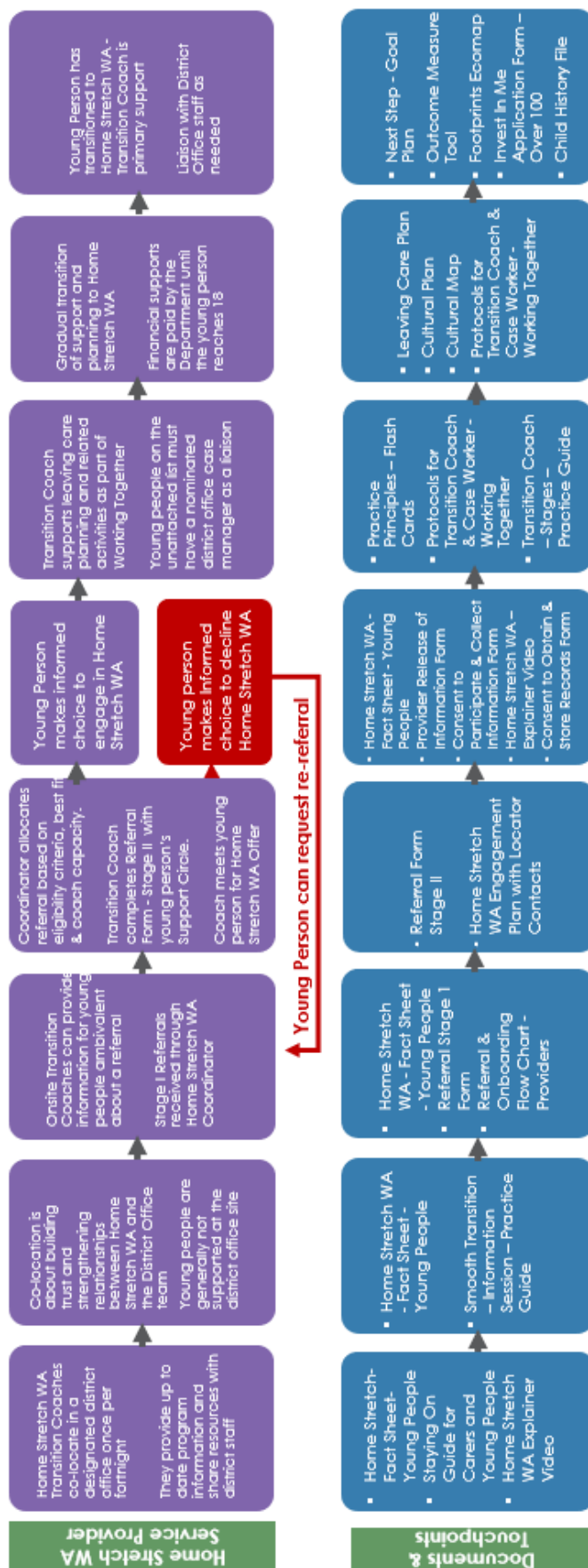
The Smooth Transition Pathway has been co-designed and developed to ensure;

- A warm handover between child protection and Home Stretch
- Avoidance of any unnecessary administrative burden on a District Office
- There are no shocks or surprises about the service offer
- Carers are involved and consulted
- Information shared at referral is contemporary and relevant.
- An **informed choice** is made by the young person at a developmentally appropriate time

This guide specifically focuses on the Home Stretch Referral pathway and the referral stages up until a young person is supported by Home Stretch at 18 years of age.



How to Refer a Young Person to Home Stretch WA for Service Providers



Awareness- From 15 Years

The Role of a Transition Coach

Broad communication of the Home Stretch WA Service Offer

Introducing the Home Stretch WA service offer in the WA care system requires information and awareness about the Home Stretch WA service offer to be communicated broadly across the system.

Young people, foster and family carers, Aboriginal Community organisations, Aboriginal elders, child protection workers, biological families and other key members of young people's support circle must become aware of the supports and resources that form Home Stretch WA.

This information will then be shared reliably and openly across the system and equip families and young people to understand and plan for the future and know what supports are available.

Embedding in District Offices

Through being embedded in district offices and building strong networks with Community Service Organisation (CSO) foster care agencies and other service providers, Transition Coaches become a reliable source of information and knowledge about the Home Stretch WA service offer and guide key stakeholders towards up-to-date resources.

Transition coaches might put up Home Stretch WA posters in district offices, attend networking meetings with other service providers, give presentations to CSO foster care events as well as have informal conversations with carers, young people and other stakeholders who make contact on the days they are embedded in the local district office.



Awareness – From 15 Years

The Role of a Home Stretch Provider

No direct engagement with young people at this stage

- Build Trust and Relationships across the system
- Help Create Digital Content for Social Media with young people in your program
- Map out the Key People in the District Office
- Hot Desk/Co-locate in the District Office
- Build a strong relationship with a District Office Home Stretch Champion
- Build Relationships with other Foster Care organisations
- Provide Up to Date information and advice about Home Stretch Services across the system.

Break down “Us/Them” perceptions by always focusing on young people

The Role of a Coordinator

Build Trust and Relationships with District Office Leadership

- Visit each district office on a regular rotation
- Establish protocols for Transition Coaches hot desking
- Manage Expectations and Demand for Transition Coach time

Check in with District Champions around health of relationships between teams.

Liaise with other Home Stretch services and Leaving Care Providers

Respond to enquiries about referral criteria and process



Awareness- From 15 Years

What Key documents or Tools are used?

- ☐ Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet- Young People
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Explainer Video
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Carers & young People
- ☐ Other Resources/Presentations



Referral - From 17 Years

Stage I- Referral- Working Together

Child Protection Leads/Home Stretch Supports

When a young person reaches 17 or anytime after, their case manager [or another district office staff member] of District Champion will offer them the choice to be referred to Home Stretch.

The Young Person is provided the **Home Stretch Factsheet, Home Stretch Video Links and Home Stretch Staying On Guide for Carers and Young People** where appropriate.

With the young persons consent, basic information is recorded on the Home Stretch Stage I Referral form and sent to the Home Stretch Coordinator.

The Stage I Form is standardised across metro and located on the Department of Communities internal SharePoint Site

Enough information is provided to help a Home Stretch WA provider allocate to a coach and not so much information that a screening assessment is undertaken. It is designed to be quick and prevent bottlenecks at an administrative level. Weekly allocation and responses to the referrer is provided by the Home Stretch Provider.

Role of the Transition Coach

A Transition Coach must create an accessible pathway for a young person to make an informed choice about whether to sign up to Home Stretch WA, and the offer of extended supports.

Referrals typically come through the young person's case manager in the district office when the young person reaches 17, though the young person themselves (and others in their support circle) can drive this process by contacting the local Home Stretch WA provider, providing them with the young person's details and the name of the District Office they were most recently connected to.

Co-location

Transition coaches typically spend a few hours per fortnight in a nominated district office, co-locating to build trust and connections between the child protection staff and the Home Stretch WA team.

Working Together with a District & By Name List Approach

Home Stretch Providers should discuss with their local District Office whether they are using a 'By Name List' Approach to ensure every young person eligible has been offered the chance to find out more about Home Stretch.

Referral- From 17 Years

Allocation

Prior to Allocation Meeting

- Stage I Referrals are Screened for Eligibility by Coordinator
- Additional Information is only sought to complete gaps in the form, or if there are issues with eligibility [NDIS]
- Details Recorded into Intake Tracking Database by the Coordinator [or delegate] for discussion at next Allocation Meeting

*Coordinator Supports and Monitors Transition Coaches workloads to keep a balanced case load [40% low needs 40% moderate needs 20% high needs]

Allocation Meeting- Weekly

- All new referrals are briefly presented and discussed for allocation
- Young People are allocated to most appropriate coach [consider support needs, gender, cultural identity, location relevant to coach]
- Young People with High Support Needs or Multiple Weekly Appointments are allocated a Secondary Coach
- Young People in Foster/Family Care Arrangements are also allocated to the Staying On Facilitator

Role of Staying On Facilitator in Allocations

Young people eligible for a Staying On agreement will be allocated to both the Transition Coach and the Staying Facilitator.

The Staying On Facilitator will connect with carers supports and begin a parallel smooth transition process with carer supports, while the Transition Coach will focus on the young person.

The Staying On Facilitator must be involved in completing the Stage II with the carer or carers supports.



Referral- From 17 Years

Stage II – Informed Choice

Home Stretch Leads/Child Protection Supports

The allocated Transition Coach contacts the person nominated in the Stage I form and collects enough information to understand how best to connect with the young person. This might be the young person directly.

Information is collected and recorded in the Stage II Form to guide engagement and planning the info session.

****The Stage II Form does not need to be completed in its entirety, though provides a useful resource to plan for engagement and continuity in supports.***

Additional information is collected by the coach from the young persons support circle. The purpose of collecting this information is to understand how best to connect with a young person.

The Stage II Form will begin some early screening of risk and support needs however is not a screening assessment

For young people eligible for Staying On

- The Transition Coach and the Staying On facilitator work together to ensure the young persons family/carer is included

For young people with a Public Trustee or Advocate:

- It is important that young people are included in the process and decision making.
- Home Stretch WA has a range of financial supports and its important to understand the limits a young person might have on decision making around finances.

Risk & Challenges

- If during Stage II Transition Coaches discover information that identifies a young person might be at immediate risk or have significant challenges. This should be taken back to the Coordinator and the Allocation Meeting

Referral- From 17 Years

Stage II – Informed Choice

Role of The Transition Coach

Once the referral is allocated, the Transition Coach will identify and work with the young person's key support person to arrange an information session to provide the young person with information about the service offer, providing them with the opportunity to make an informed choice about whether they engage in Home Stretch WA or seek alternative supports.

Stage II is designed to ensure a warm handover of supports around a young person and continuity in support planning. This reduces the impact on workload for the district office staff, whilst also providing the transition coach insight into the young person's existing supports and relationships, supporting the young person's development of capacity and connection.

The key support person might be a foster carer, a support worker from an NGO service, the young person's case manager or someone else in their support circles. For young people who have returned after a period of disengagement, this might be the team leader or duty officer in the district office.

Cultural protocols are mapped and understood, and the plan to engage a young person in an info session is made with consultation and support from those who best understand the cultural and family context the young person is living within.

For some Aboriginal young people, the approach to connecting and offering the service may require Aboriginal transition coaches to spend time with families and their young people first, to listen to what the family has experienced and how they would like to connect with the offer of support

Role of The Staying On Facilitator

The 'Staying On' facilitator replicates this process, working in parallel with the Transition Coach, but focused on developing a pathway for a foster or family carer to be supported to make an informed choice about the young person Staying On.

Stage II- 6 Week Follow Up Time Frame

Transition Coaches generally have up to 6 weeks to follow-up the referral and attempt to contact the young person and complete the service offer.

In cases where the case manager has a strong connection to the young person, and they are highly motivated to engage, the Stage II referral form can be completed by the case manager and a young person can move quickly through the process of signing up to Home Stretch WA within a few days of their referral being allocated.

Referral- From 17 Years

What Key Documents or tools are used?

Referral Stages

Stage I

- ☐ Stage I Referral Form – Stored on Department of Communities Internal SharePoint Site
- ☐ Smooth Transition- By Name List Approach & Meeting Agenda

Allocation

- ☐ Home Stretch WA- Service Tracking Tool for Providers

Stage II

- ☐ Stage II Referral Form
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet for Young People
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Explainer Video
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Carers & young People
- ☐ Other Resources/ Information Sessions/ Presentations or Posters



Some young people may have disengaged from the child protection system before 17.

Young people who seek to self-refer can be supported by a provider to seek a referral to be made on their behalf to a Home Stretch WA provider.

Choice- From 17 Years

Planning “The Pitch “ or information session or Yarning Circle

Stage II will help you understand;

- Where and when should you meet?
- What does this young person need to know?
- What are the most important parts of the offer?
- How should it be explained?
- Who needs to be there and will help the young person make the choice?

The info session should be designed around the young person and their cultural and family context.

It can be completed through a yarning circle with the young person's supports, teleconferencing, telephone conversations, or an individualized video message for young people who required additional support to engage in Home Stretch WA can be sent from their potential Transition Coach.

Information Session or Yarning Circle Tips

- Flexible and Individualised
- Keep it Short, Sharp and Simple
- Use language and examples that make sense to the young person
- Practical examples “What Home Stretch can offer you”
- Engage and Involve Support Circle from the start
- Young Person Makes the Choice – When they are ready
- Personalised Videos for hard to engage

What if young people say no?

Young people can decline the Home Stretch WA service offer.

They should be provided with information about how to reconnect either directly or through a district office in the future.

If they haven't responded within the 6 week period, then the referral is typically closed and everyone is informed of the pathway to reconnect

Choice- From 17 Years

What key documents or tools are used?

- ☐ Home Stretch WA- Information Session- Practice Guide
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet for Young People
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Explainer Video
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Carers & Young People



Onboarding- From 17 ½ Years

The Role of a Transition Coach

When a young person agrees to sign up to Home Stretch, this stage is about ensuring the young person gives informed consent and ensuring a smooth transition and warm handover between the Department of Communities case worker and the Home Stretch WA Transition coach.

The Transition Coach supports leaving care planning activities with a view to take over primary support after 18.

To achieve this, the process ideally begins when the young person is 17 ½, allowing for relationship building, and comfort/ease of transition for the young person.

From the young person's 18th birthday, while they are still in statutory care, the principles and practices of Home Stretch WA begin to inform the support provided, with continuity in Housing, Education and Support being a primary focus.

Sign up & Informed Consent

- Young people aren't active with Home Stretch until they have signed the consent forms.
- These should be explained to young people so they are aware of what they are signing up for and give consent for information to be shared with other agencies and support circles.

Essential For Sign Up & Informed Consent:

- **Consent to Participate and collect Information Form-** Young People Consent to Home Stretch
- **Provider Release of Information Form** - Ensures young people have given permission for Transition Coaches to gain and share information with other agencies or people within their support circles.

The **Consent to Obtain Records Form** helps Transition Coaches work with a young person and a district office to make sure that the young person has access to the records and information they need.

- Not all of these things will be available.
- Not all of these documents need to be stored

Onboarding – From 17 ½ Years

Support Circles Approach

During the onboarding and transition to Home Stretch WA period, it is encouraged that Transition Coaches connect and build strong working relationships and trust with the young person's current supports (case workers, organizational supports, natural networks etc.), with the intention of providing a smooth transition. A support circles approach should guide onboarding.

The first few sessions with the young person may be further enriched by having their current supports there, as it provides a sense of familiarity while the young person and the Transition Coach build their working relationship.

Working Together Under 18

From 17 ½ the Transition Coach works together with the young person's case manager to warmly transfer support across to the Home Stretch provider by the young person's 18th birthday.

The 'Working Together Protocols' for Transition Coaches & Case Workers document outlines the allocation of tasks between the young person's current supports, the responsibilities of the Transition Coach, and tasks that benefit from a collaborative approach.

The young person is still in statutory care, but the principles and practices of Home Stretch begin to inform the support provided.

The Transition Coach supports leaving care planning activities with a view to take over primary support after 18.

Continuity in Housing, Education and Support are a primary focus

Working together Over 18

Young people who have already left care may not have anyone who knows them at the District Office. There are very limited dedicated resources available to Districts to support young people after 18.

Good relationships with Districts will help you collect the information and knowledge you need to pick up on things that need to be continued or finished. The District Champion might help.

Onboarding- From 17 ½ Years

What Key Documents or Tools are Used?

Sign Up Documents

- ☐ Consent to Participate & Collect Information Form
- ☐ Provider Release of Information Form

Working Together Documents

- ☐ Working Together Protocols for Transition Coach and Case Worker
- ☐ Working Together Resource Planning Timeline
- ☐ Consent to Obtain & Store Records Form

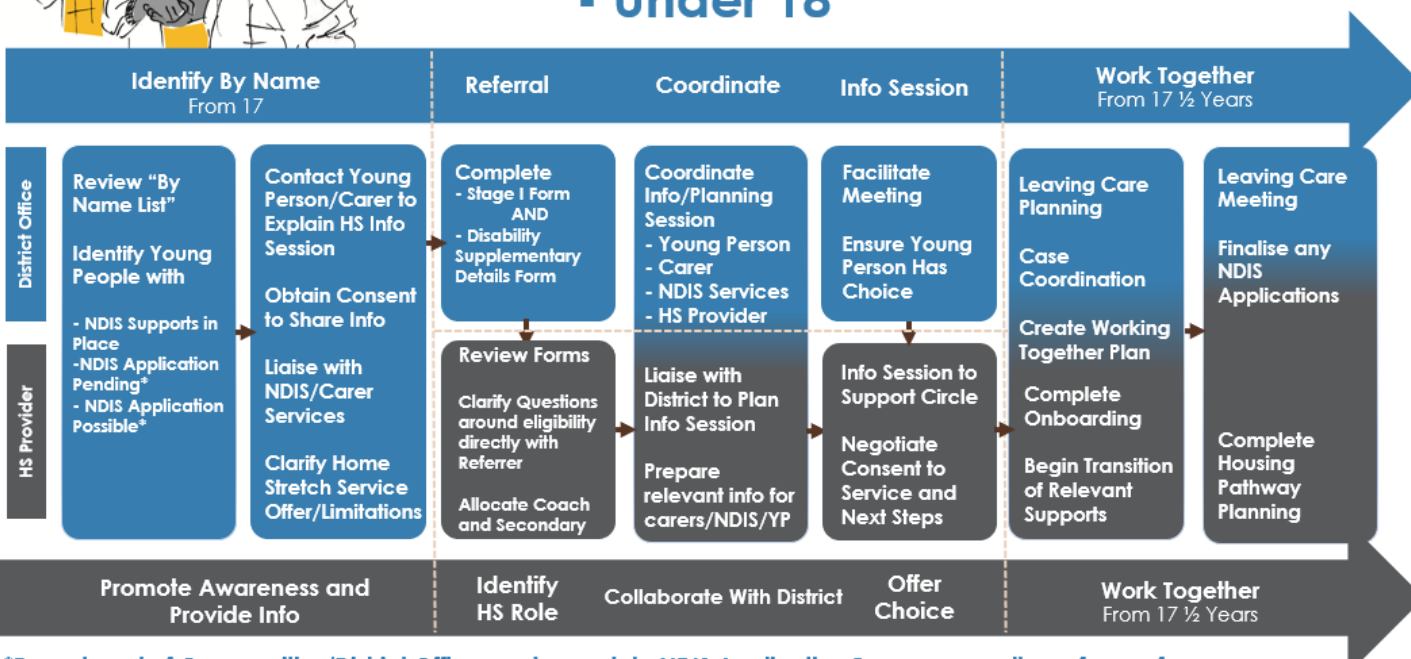
Supporting Documents

- ☐ Smooth Transition- Simple Action Plan





How We Connect Young People Living With Disabilities with Home Stretch WA - Under 18



*Department of Communities/District Office must complete NDIS Application Process regardless of age of young person.

*District Office and Home Stretch WA Provider should work together to engage Specialist NDIS Assessment Support Service to support young people who may be eligible but have not been assessed or offered pathway.

How to Connect Young People Living with Disabilities with Home Stretch WA

Disability Supports in Home Stretch WA

Disability Supports in Home Stretch WA

For a young person living with a disability that limits their capacity to live independently, or where a young person has complex care needs (Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) Level 5), the following eligibility criteria must be met:

- The young person must have the capacity to make an informed choice about engaging with a Home Stretch WA service provider.
- An NDIS support package must be in place and appropriately resourced to meet the daily living needs of the young person.
- A funded coordination function must be included in the NDIS package.

If a young person meets the eligibility criteria above, referrals made to a Home Stretch WA service provider must not be intended to substitute for, or create a temporary solution in lieu of, an appropriate support package through the NDIS.

The Child Protection System is currently working on improving practice and process to support young people to link with the NDIS.

The By Name List Supports Districts to track whether all young people have been offered Home Stretch WA, and whether they have been referred or on-boarded.

From 17 young people are added to the District 'By Name List'

The Leaving Care Team or District Champion manages the local list, and often names with Home Stretch WA providers as part of a community triage/referral pathway being tested in regions.

Young people are classified into three categories.

NDIS Participant

Young person has been assessed as living with a disability and are currently supported through an NDIS Support Plan.

NDIS Access Request in Progress

Young person is being supported to gather evidence, undergo assessments and submit a request for an NDIS support package.

NDIS Request is Required

A young person, their support circle, or Child Protection have identified that the young person may be living with a disability that will require ongoing support. A young person may have disengaged or refused efforts by their support circles around the NDIS Request.

How to Connect Young People Living with Disabilities with Home Stretch WA

Role of Child Protection- Smooth Transition for NDIS participants

From 15 (as part of leaving care planning)

Case Manager provides basic information about Home Stretch WA to eligible young people and their support circles. It should highlight; Home Stretch WA is a specialist, time-limited service to support young people to transition from care.

option/choice for each young person, not the carer and should not be integrated or assumed in forward planning.

From 17

Case Manager (supported by District Champion) talks to young person and family about arranging an info session about the Home Stretch service and obtains consent to share basic information around the young persons living arrangement and current support needs.

Young people who have disengaged from the Department may also be discussed at a 'By Name' Meeting.

From 17

Complete the Referral for Info Session (Stage I)

The case manager completes the Stage I Referral Form and the Disability/NDIS Supplementary Details.

The form is sent to the Home Stretch WA provider in the region the young person is likely to be living in after 18.

The case manager should advise NDIS providers, carers and other relevant supports that the Home Stretch WA provider will offer an info session for the young person and their key supports as part of the referral process

Disability/NDIS Supplementary form

- If a young person has either a confirmed or suspected disability related needs and is currently accessing or is likely to apply to access the NDIS in the future
- Provides additional information that can assist in identifying and planning out the information session.
- Provides an opportunity to include NDIS supports in early planning of transition.
- Provides an opportunity to identify any young people who will need ongoing support around the access request.

How to Connect Young People Living with Disabilities with Home Stretch WA

Information Session with NDIS Supports

Stage II

The Home Stretch WA provider should use the Stage II Forms to plan out how best to communicate and offer the service to the young person and their support circles

Info Session would typically include the young person's key supports to help with communicating the service offer to the young person and ensure they can make an informed choice.

What is the Districts Role in the Information Session with Young Person with a Disability?

District Case Manager coordinates the Information Session and liaises with the Provider Coordinator & allocated Transition Coach to arrange the time/day for the Information Session

Together with the Provider, invites the young person, carer/s, their legal guardian (if relevant), and any current (or proposed) NDIS support service representative/s, preferably the Support Coordinator

Follow the Information Session Practice Guide-Connecting young people Living with a Disability to Home Stretch WA

The purpose of the **Information Session** is to consider;

- the types and levels of support that the Home Stretch WA provider can offer
- the current supports and resources provided through the NDIS and the child protection system
- the young person understanding of Home Stretch WA, and willingness to engage and work with a transition coach.
- The info session provides an opportunity to ensure young people's needs are understood, and they are able to get the support they need.

The young persons agency must always be respected!

Young people must be able to make an informed choice in an information session.

How to Connect Young People Living with Disabilities with Home Stretch WA

What key Documents and Tools

- ☐ Home Stretch WA How we connect young people with Disabilities with Home Stretch- Under 18

Awareness

- ☐ Smooth Transition- Information Session Practice Guide- Connecting young people living with Disabilities to Home Stretch

Referral

- ☐ Stage I Referral form – Saved on Department SharePoint Site
- ☐ Disability Supplementary Details Form – saved on Department SharePoint Site

Appendix

Documents

Awareness – From 15

- ☐ Home Stretch WA- Information Session- Practice Guide
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet for Young People
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Explainer Video
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Carers & Young People
- ☐ Smooth Transition- Information Session Practice Guide- Connecting young people living with Disabilities to Home Stretch

Referral – From 17

Stage I

- ☐ Stage I Referral Form – Stored on Department of Communities Internal SharePoint Site
- ☐ Smooth Transition- By Name List Approach & Meeting Agenda
- ☐ Disability Supplementary Details Form – saved on Department SharePoint Site

Allocation

- ☐ Home Stretch WA- Service Tracking Tool for Providers

Stage II

- ☐ Stage II Referral Form
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet for Young People
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Explainer Video
- ☐ Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Carers & young People
- ☐ Other Resources/ Information Sessions/ Presentations or Posters

Onboarding – From 17 ½

Sign Up Documents

- ☐ Consent to Participate & Collect Information Form
- ☐ Provider Release of Information Form

Working Together Documents

- ☐ Working Together Protocols for Transition Coach and Case Worker
- ☐ Working Together Resource Planning Timeline
- ☐ Consent to Obtain & Store Records Form

Supporting- From 18

- ☐ Smooth Transition- Simple Action Plan

Practice Guidelines for the Home Stretch WA Information Session



Brief Summary of the Session

The Home Stretch WA Information Session is the first, in-person, casual but comprehensive introduction to the Home Stretch WA offer.

It is an opportunity for the Transition Coach to discuss each element of the offer, highlighting the young person's right to access support that is flexible, reliable, and unconditional.

This is also the first introduction to you as their (potential) Transition Coach, so bring your A-GAME!



What is the intended outcome of the session from a young person's perspective?

It is intended that the information session allows for the young person to make an informed choice regarding the Home Stretch WA offer, providing them with the opportunity to ask questions, reflect, and consider whether Home Stretch WA is right for them.

We want young people to feel that their expertise regarding their own life is acknowledged and respected, and that we are committed to 'meeting them where they are at' and 'walking alongside' them as they navigate their development to interdependence.

What Practice Principles or System Principles are relevant for the Coach?

You can make an informed choice about the support you receive from Home Stretch WA
- There are no shocks for you or the important people in your life.

A reliable source of Support is your right
- It's your choice to join and you can choose to come and go.

You are the expert in your life, you deserve the freedom and respect to make your own choices - Our support is unconditional.

What do you do (Step by Step Guide) to run this session?

Preparation:

1. Complete the Stage II Referral Form with the person who has the strongest connection with the young person. This will help you understand their support circles and what they might need from Home Stretch WA.
2. If there are any concerns about engagement or the young person has been identified as having more complex support needs; invite the secondary coach to join you for the info session so the young person can meet them.
3. If the young person is seeking to Stay On, liaise with the Staying On Facilitator around a time you might meet with both the carer and young person.
4. Contact the young person directly (and carer) to explain that you would like to meet and have a conversation about Home Stretch WA. Offer to email the Service Offer Video, Flyer for Young People, and Staying On Booklet prior to meeting in person.
5. Arrange a time to catch-up at a place and time that suits them and feels safe and private. Offer the young person the option of bringing a person from their support circles or to meet separately.
6. Send a digital message to the young person the morning of the catch up to remind them.
7. Take all of the service information as well as the sign-up paperwork to the meeting in case the young person elects to Opt-In on the spot.



Location:

Discuss the location with the young person (and Support Circle), choosing somewhere that is most comfortable for them.

Typically, their home, a coffee shop, a local park, or something similar are good suggestions.

Step by Step Session Plan:

1. Introduce yourself and what your role is at Home Stretch WA. It's sometimes nice to offer a little insight into why you wanted to be a part of Home Stretch WA, as it communicates your genuine intent to be an engaged and reliable support for the young person.
2. Ask the young person what sparked their interest in Home Stretch WA – this usually provides insight into how much the young person knows about the offer already, what they hope may be beneficial to their current situation, or what they hope to work towards. This allows for the Transition Coach to not only provide a broad understanding of the Home Stretch WA offer, but a more tailored understanding of how Home Stretch WA may support the young person's specific needs.
3. Go through the Home Stretch WA offer. If you have insight into the young person's needs/ goals, use them as examples to explain how Home Stretch WA may be able to support the young person to work towards attaining them.
4. Discuss the role of the Transition Coach, highlighting the 'walk alongside' approach and the acknowledgement and respect for the young person's right to autonomy.
5. Allow the young person (and carer) to ask questions or discuss any concerns.
6. Offer the young person up to a week to think about the offer and schedule a follow-up time that is appropriate. They may wish to speak to people in their support circle about the choice OR,
7. Go through sign-up documents with the young person, checking for understanding along the way, and highlighting that they can opt-out (and back in) at any time

What Tools or Forms do you use?

- Home Stretch WA - Fact Sheet - Young People
- Home Stretch WA - Explainer Video
- Staying On - Guide for Carers and Young People (if applicable)
- Referral Stage II Form
- Sign-up documents - Provider Release of Information Form, Consent to Participate & Collect Information Form, Consent to Obtain & Store Records Form

How might you include Support Circles?

It is important to acknowledge that young people are a part of a wider social unit and engaging people in their support circle is beneficial to the development of the young person's interdependence.

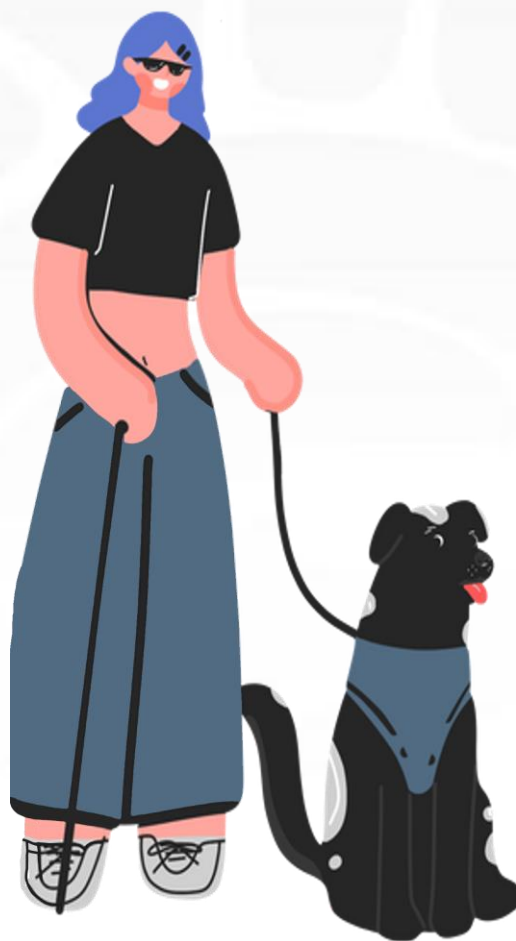
Encouraging the young person to bring someone from their support circle to the information session, often supports a more relaxed and comfortable interaction for the young person, whilst also supporting a collaborative approach to the young person's care.



Smooth Transition

Home
Stretch
WA

Information Session Practice Guide- Connecting young people Living with Disabilities to Home Stretch WA



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Produced by:
Anglicare WA
Home Stretch WA Team

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Information Session Practice Guide - Connecting young people Living with Disabilities to Home Stretch WA

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Introduction

The Home Stretch WA service offer provides young people with a right to access continuity in support until they reach the age of 21. It is a highly individualised service, focused on empowering each young person to grow and maintain their connections and interdependence with their community as they transition from Out-Of-Home Care (OOHC). An individualised approach is critical to best support young people living with a disability transitioning from Out-Of-Home Care. Each young person's situation is highly unique, requiring intentional conversations with the young person and their support circles to explore the right balance of supports delivered by Home Stretch WA and the NDIS.

Home Stretch WA providers work with young people who may require different levels of tailored support to reach their goals. A considerable number of young people transitioning from OOHC are living with a disability and would significantly benefit from participating in the Home Stretch WA service.

Home Stretch WA includes a financial safety net of resourcing that supports young people's housing stability and other life domains, as well as 1:1 coaching. These resources are designed to reduce over time as a young person becomes increasingly interdependent in their community and more financially self-reliant.

This guide outlines how to prepare for a meeting to provide information regarding the Home Stretch WA service offer to a young person living with a disability and their support circles.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS provides support to people with a disability, their families, and carers. A young person with a disability who has been determined to meet the NDIS access requirements, can choose to become a NDIS participant. Each NDIS participant will develop an individual plan outlining their goals and how the funding they have received will be used to purchase supports and services to pursue these goals.

The NDIS is designed to meet a young person's ongoing disability-related needs. Support to complete daily living activities, investment in assistive technologies, home or vehicle modifications, specialised equipment and support that helps a young person build their independence and skills, are the main areas for which NDIS funding is provided. However, the NDIS does have some limitations as to what it is able to fund. For example, supports not directly related to a young person's disability, or those that relate to day-to-day living costs, for which all young people are subject to pay, are not funded by the NDIS.

Benefits & Limitations of Home Stretch WA

The flexibility of the Home Stretch WA service enables Home Stretch WA providers to work with young people living with disabilities to provide additional supports to the young person and their support circles, that complement the disability-related supports offered through the NDIS, without becoming a replacement to those enduring supports.

The Home Stretch WA service will work in partnership with the Department of Communities and the young persons' NDIS support providers who are responsible for;

- developing an application for a support package through the NDIS.
- supporting a young person with the complex care needs related to their disability or
- providing personal care supports, physical support needs and independent daily living supports



About the Info Session

What is the Info Session?

To ensure the young person's choice, control and agency, they are actively involved in exploring whether Home Stretch WA is going to meet some of their support needs. The Info Session describes the process of meeting with the young person and all their relevant supports to provide information regarding the Home Stretch WA service offer.

The Goals of the Info Session are to:

- Provide the young person and their support circle the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding about the Home Stretch WA service, including the benefits, scope and limitations
- Develop a common understanding for all participants in the Info Session, of the role of the NDIS supports as the primary and enduring resource for a young person and their carers in all areas of their life that are impacted by their disability
- Determine how the Home Stretch WA service offer may complement, without duplicating the young person's NDIS supports, and assist to meet their support needs that are not related to their disability.

When does the Info Session occur?

Once the Home Stretch WA provider has received the Stage I Referral Form and the Disability Supplementary Details Form, the Coordinator can liaise with the District Office to gain further clarity or details on the information, if required. The Coordinator then allocates the primary Transition Coach and the Transition Coach and Coordinator directly liaise with the Child Protection Case Manager to arrange the Info Session meeting time.

Who attends the Info Session?

The Info Session is coordinated by the young person's Child Protection Case Manager and involves the young person, carer/s, their legal guardian (if relevant), and any current (or proposed) NDIS support service representative/s, preferably the Support Coordinator.

Important Considerations of the Info Session

What will the Info Session look like?

1. An individualised approach is critical to best support young people with a disability transitioning from OOHHC. Each young person's situation is unique, requiring intentional conversations with the young person and their support circle to explore and plan the right balance of supports to be delivered by Home Stretch WA and the NDIS.
2. The meeting is held in a place that is safe and convenient for the young person and their family.
3. Whilst the Info Session process is described as a single in-person meeting with all supports in attendance, it is adapted to suit the individual needs of the young person. For example, an Info Session can include:
 - smaller discussions/meetings with individual stakeholders
 - where the young person only attends a portion of the Info Session
 - information presented in a range of formats.

A young person's attendance at the Info Session can be considered by members of their support circle to not be in the young person's best interests. In this circumstance, a separate Info Session is arranged and held between the Home Stretch WA provider and the young person's key supports (including Case Manager). The most appropriate person is identified at this meeting to connect with the young person and provide the opportunity for the young person to make an informed choice about the Home Stretch WA service.



Informed Choice

The Info Session will assist a young person to make an informed choice about their participation and engagement with Home Stretch WA. Provisions are made for a young person's legal decision maker/s to be in attendance if they are unable to legally consent to their involvement, e.g. where plenary guardianship orders or limited guardianship orders are made and stipulate decision-making authority over services.

As part of the Stage II Referral process, Home Stretch WA providers need to gain a thorough understanding of what informed choice means in the specific context of supporting each young person living with a disability. This can include consideration of:

- how best to communicate with the young person
- who else might need to be involved to ensure that the young person's agency is respected and
- who has clear legal authority to provide informed consent.

Support Decision-Making Capacity

- Young people with disabilities have the right to make decisions about their own lives, regardless of the level of support they require.
- Foster decision-making capacity by providing tailored and accessible support, information and resources.

Explain Risks, Benefits & Consequences

- Present a balanced view of the potential benefits, risks and consequences of the service offer.
- Help the young person understand the implications of their choices, in relation to their disability-related needs and the available support services.

Encourage Questions & Active Participation

- Encourage the young person to ask questions and seek clarification on any aspect they may not fully understand.
- Actively involve them in discussions and decision-making processes, valuing their opinions and perspectives.

Respect Choices & Preferences

- Respect the decisions made by the young person, even if they differ from what you may recommend or prefer.
- Acknowledge that their choices should reflect their values, goals and aspirations.

Document & Communicate Choices

- Ensure accurate documentation of the young person's choices and preferences, with their consent.
- Share this information appropriately with relevant stakeholders, such as carers, guardians, and other support services involved in their care.

Review & Revisit Choices

- Recognise that choices and circumstances may change over time.
- Regularly review and revisit the young person's choices to ensure their ongoing relevance and alignment with their evolving needs and aspirations.

Preparing for the Info Session

Prepare relevant information & resources to provide the young person, their carer/s & other parties, about the Home Stretch WA service offer

- Match the presentation of information with the young person's preferred learning styles and ways of communicating, to allow a young person to understand their choices, the supports offered and their right to make an informed choice.
- Make any adaptations needed to specific resources to help communicate the service to young people and their carers.
- Provide an overview of the Home Stretch WA service supports applicable to the young person with clarity and accuracy, rather than detail on all parts of the service.

Use the Stage II Referral Form to gather relevant information

- The Transition Coach uses the Stage II Form to gather relevant information about the young person's current living situation, goals, support needs and their support circle.
- Gather specific information regarding the young person's disability support needs and current funded supports, that may be important to discuss at the meeting. Include whether the young person can engage in 1:1 support with a Transition Coach.
- The Regional Intensive Support Coordination (RISC) worker in the District Office may also be an important source of information and assistance, as well as any foster/family carer support staff or agencies working with the young person's carer.



Info Session

Step 1. Intro & Icebreaker

- Introduce all participants.
- An acknowledgement of country and cultural representation is explored sensitively with Aboriginal families and young people.
- Establish a shared commitment to working together to explore how the Home Stretch WA service may support the young person and whether they would like to engage with the service.
- Encourage everyone to briefly share something positive or interesting about themselves to break the ice.

Step 2. Explain the Purpose of the Session

- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting:
'To provide information about Home Stretch WA services and support the young person in making an informed choice.'
- Emphasise that Home Stretch WA is about building a young person's interdependence in their community, their self-reliance and ability to independently access resources and supports from mainstream services.

Step 3. Present the Home Stretch WA Service Offer

- Provide a clear and concise overview of the services offered by Home Stretch WA, emphasizing the key elements that are most relevant to the young person and clarify the criteria for any of the support resources.
 - Transition Coach Support
 - Invest In Me Funding
 - Staying On Subsidy (if relevant)
 - Housing Allowance
- Highlight any parts of the offer that are:
 - already covered through the NDIS package
 - may be missing from the package
 - cannot be met by the Home Stretch WA service.

Step 4. Address Questions & Concerns

- Encourage the young person, their carer, guardian, and disability support service representatives to ask questions and share concerns.
- Answer queries honestly and provide additional information or clarification as needed.
- If there are questions that require further exploration, state this and who will follow up and communicate the information.
- If there are concerns specific to the young person's disability, address them with sensitivity and involve the disability support service in providing relevant information.
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of the expectations and limitations of the service offer, particularly in relation to Staying On and the Housing Allowance.

Info Session

Step 5. Discuss Transition Coaching

- Based on the young person's specific needs, explore the role of a Transition Coach and how they may work with the young person towards meeting their goals.
- Invite the young person to share their hopes and aspirations or areas of their life in where they would like support from the Transition Coach
- Invite the disability support service representative/s to provide a comprehensive description of the young person's current support services and where there may be gaps or duplication.

Step 6. Explore the Young Person's Preferences & Goals

- Ask the young person to share their preferences regarding who they want involved in supporting them and how they want this to work.
- Ensure the young person is aware that it is their choice whether to participate in the Home Stretch WA service and to engage with a Transition Coach.
- Encourage the young person to think about the choice and to discuss it with a trusted person.
- Offer the young person another time to meet separately with the Transition Coach to hear more about the service.

Step 7. Provide Information on Next Steps

- **Summarise** what was agreed and discussed during the meeting.
- **Outline the next steps** in the process. For example, this could be:
 - arranging another meeting to continue the onboarding process directly with the young person,
 - collecting and sharing information about the NDIS package or application progress to coordinate how Home Stretch WA can be a complimentary support service
 - offering the young person more time and space to consider and communicate about their choice.
- Check in with the young person, their carer/s and other support person/s to confirm their understanding of the Home Stretch WA service.
- Outline how the young person communicates their decision and what happens next if they choose to engage in the service. This will include the development of a Working Together Plan, and the completion of further onboarding activities.
- If the young person does not communicate any desire or intent to engage with Home Stretch WA, they are given up to 6 weeks from time of the Stage I referral being sent, to make their decision.
- The Home Stretch WA provider advises the young person, their carer and disability support service representatives of the pathway to return to seek support, either directly in the short term, or via the District office if it is greater than 12 months from the initial referral.